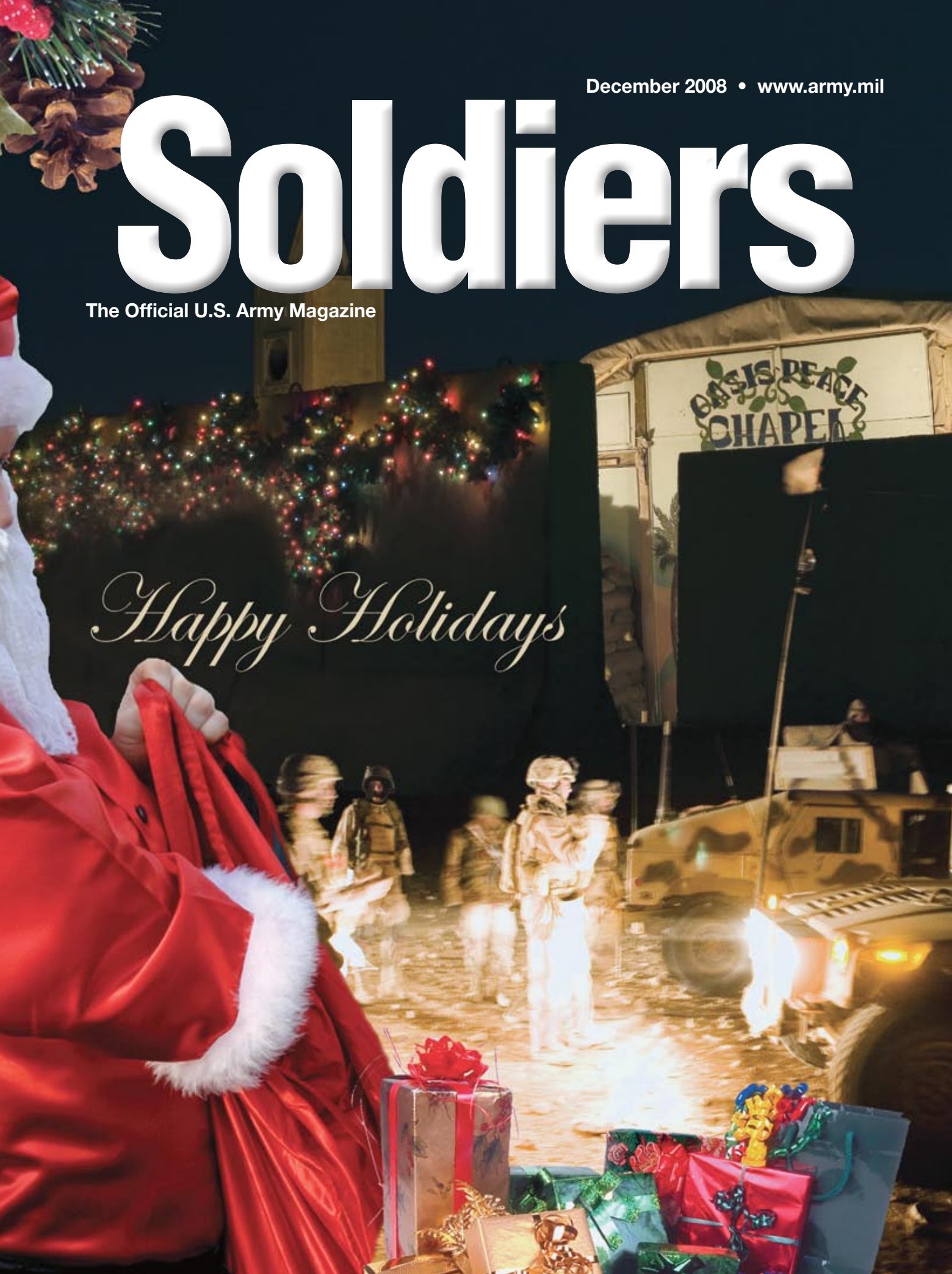


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Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

Happy Holidays



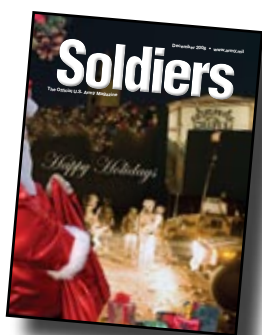


Soldiers

DECEMBER 2008 • VOLUME 63, NO. 12



Servicemembers at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, enjoy some Christmas spirit Dec. 1, 2007, thanks to a partnership between the Officers Spouse Club and Bank of America Military Segment. Bank of America provided support for festivities that included a tree-lighting ceremony, stockings full of gifts and food.



[On the Cover]

Holidays in Iraq

Montage by Peggy Frierson
using photos by Lance Cpl.
Caleb Gomez & Airman 1st
Class Jonathan Snyder

[Coming Next Month]

Almanac 2009

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▲ (Top Photo) Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. speaks to Soldiers of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Forward Operating Base Hammer Dec. 19, 2007.

◀ Santa greets children in Bang Pla, Thailand, during a Christmas party, Dec. 20, 1969. Santa was played by Staff Sgt. Nicolas Thomas, from the 325th Signal Battalion.



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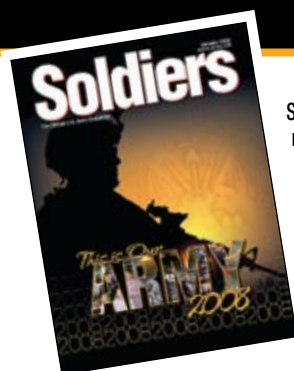
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Armed Forces Inaugural Committee

Servicemembers to help usher in new president

Story by C. Todd Lopez



EVERY four years the United States elects a president, and each time, members of the armed forces have participated in the inaugural events.

Military participation dates back to the inauguration of George Washington. On April 20, 1789, Soldiers, local militias and war veterans escorted the president to his swearing-in—then held in New York City.

Today, the Department of Defense stands up the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee well in advance of each presidential election. The members of the AFIC, a committee of Joint Forces Headquarters-National Capital Region, orchestrate the participation of today's military in inaugural events.

During the 10-day period, Jan. 15-24, the military provides ceremonial support to the presidential inauguration with musical units, marching bands, color guards, salute batteries and honor cordons. The AFIC itself will eventually be made up of more than 700 military personnel. But by inauguration day, as many as 5,000 servicemembers will be ready to participate. Their presence and activities

A Soldier marches in the inaugural parade, Jan. 20, 2005.



The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets practice in front of the presidential reviewing stand at Fort Myer, Va., Jan. 10, 1993, in preparation for the presidential inauguration.

are coordinated by the AFIC.

The AFIC works with two other committees to plan the events that surround the inauguration of the president. The first, the Presidential Inaugural Committee, a non-profit organization that is formed after the general election and represents the president-elect, plans and funds the parade following the swearing-in of the president and the evening's celebratory balls. The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies plans the actual inauguration event.

The AFIC itself works with both committees, lending support wherever a military presence is needed.

"What we do is provide ceremonial support to those two organizations, where they ask, and within Department of Defense guidelines," said Sgt. Maj. Brian S. Picerno, who serves as the senior enlisted advisor for AFIC members. It is his role to take care of the more than 700 military members, including more than

200 Soldiers, who will eventually be part of AFIC.

Despite the AFIC's proximity and participation in what is a very political process, Picerno is quick to point out that the AFIC itself is a non-political, non-partisan committee—without an opinion about who wins the election.

"We are totally non-political," he said. "We don't even discuss it in here. People may discuss it outside of work, but it's pretty much one of the rules we established when we came here: we are not here to influence or discuss—we're here to support the president-elect once he is selected."

The AFIC stands up well in advance of the inauguration. As early as December 2007, more than a year before the 2009 inauguration, members of the AFIC were already being moved into temporary offices at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. In June, the group moved to its "permanent" headquarters, the Mary E. Switzer

Memorial Building, also in Washington. There, members of the AFIC set up the new headquarters, which will serve the committee until it is disbanded after the inauguration.

"We had to bring troops in here to get us set up," said Picerno. "There's a whole lot of work in getting us from Fort McNair to here—furniture, transportation, the infrastructure itself. There were no telephones, no networks. There were literally hundreds of manhours needed to set all that up."

Sergeant Richard P. Grossman volunteered for the AFIC and reported in December. He is stationed out of Fort McNair and serves as a senior supply sergeant for the Center for Military History there. At AFIC, he serves as the property book non-commissioned officer-in-charge, accounting for all property owned or borrowed by AFIC. He helped convert the AFIC headquarters from a bare-bones facility to a fully function-



C. Todd Lopez

Soldiers from the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps perform in the inaugural parade, Jan. 20, 2005.

ing military operation.

“There’s a lot of planning that goes into this,” he said. “The neatest part of it all is seeing how it goes from nothing to something. When we started here, we had four walls and a roof—there was no furniture, no equipment, nothing.”

In addition to the furniture that was brought in, AFIC also brought in some 254 computers for its staff, and another 118 are on the way. None of those computers could be networked because there were no network cables running through the 50-year-old Switzer Building. Spc. Darian J. Whittaker, stationed at Fort Detrick, Md., helped install those networks, and now provides communications, information technology, and help desk support to AFIC. He said so far the work hasn’t been tough.

“I’m enjoying this so far, it’s not too hard,” Whittaker said. “Plus, this is an opportunity of a lifetime—why pass it up?”

The AFIC, like other joint operations, follows something similar to the general staff system used by the Army. There’s an AFIC-1, for

instance, that performs personnel functions. Spc. Aaron C. Allen, a personnel clerk from Fort Myer, Va., volunteered to be part of the AFIC. He said he’s been challenged by the joint nature of the assignment.

“The hard part for me is the different way each service conducts their evaluations and boards,” he said.

Despite being a temporary assignment, participation in AFIC does last more than a year for many involved. Those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen will need to have their personnel records maintained during the temporary duty, and many will also earn awards or promotions. For Allen, having so many services involved makes it difficult to do a job that he had once done only for fellow Soldiers. But the experience is helping him learn, he said.

“Each service has its own way how they word things,” he said. “When I first started here at AFIC-1, I was just thinking Army. I was sending stuff back to the Air Force saying it was wrong, but in actuality it’s how the Air Force does it. That’s the big-

gest thing for me, the joint thinking ... how every service is tailored and thinking more than just Army. This is my first time working in a joint environment and that’s what sold me is to get the experience working with joint services at this young point in my career.”

Allen said he’ll be taking back some of that joint experience to his home station, where he’ll try to impart some of his new knowledge to those around him.

“This is like a once-in-a-lifetime experience, to come in as an E-4,” he said. “I usually don’t have that much responsibility, but to get that responsibility here and to learn to manage and take care of things—that helps build my career. I can take that back to Fort Myer and teach those below me and above me what I’ve learned, I hope, because some of them may have never worked in the joint environment.”

The AFIC-3 coordinates security operations among participating military units and with other federal agencies, in addition to providing credentialing to those who participate



Petty Officer 2nd Class David Tucker

The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets practice in front of the White House Jan. 10, 1993, in preparation for the presidential inauguration.

in inaugural events. And the military, through the AFIC-4, provides logistics support, including transportation for members of the PIC, other VIPs and members of the president-elect's family.

The military's expertise in protocol makes them ideal candidates for providing transportation support. Also, said Picerno, providing transportation support gives the military a certain amount of visibility—so it's of benefit to the military to participate.

More importantly, the military can, and is, accustomed to working people day or night—something that will need to happen during events surrounding the inauguration.

"Our people are trained on all kinds of routes," Picerno said. "We'll be using Blue Force Tracker and all kinds of communications in case there are accidents or emergencies."

Communications support for the AFIC, to include more than the computers they use in their offices, such as the radios and other communications networks needed for coordinating so many personnel, is provided by

the AFIC-6.

Staff Sgt. Jose I. Ramirez, a communications noncommissioned officer stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, will provide communications support to military personnel on the ground who need to keep in touch with the inauguration-day command center.

"We'll be using Blue Force Tracker...in case there are accidents or emergencies."

"My job is going to be to make sure everybody has their communications equipment and that it is working," he said. "If it goes down, I've got to fix it."

Ramirez said he realizes the significance of working as part of AFIC, but for now he is more impressed with what he is learning and what he can take back to his unit.

"I'll get a lot of experience out of this, what I've done as far as the

networks," he said. "There's distribution of assets and the managing and supervising of the Tactical Operations Center group. Yeah, I'm working for AFIC, but I'm focused now on my day-to-day job and not worrying about who gets elected."

During "game day," Ramirez will likely be assigned to work in the forward command post at the corner of 3rd and Pennsylvania Ave., in Washington. There, he'll monitor communications and networks from the command trailer—and have a good view of the parade. He said the opportunity to work at AFIC has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him.

"A lot of Soldiers get tired of the field, of the deployments," he said. "But sometimes there's opportunities that Soldiers don't know about. Before this, I had no idea the AFIC even existed. But every four years there's an opportunity for Soldiers of all ranks and specialties to come up here and fill a position and be here in the nation's capital—and that's a pretty nice perk for being a service-member." **sm**

President dedicates Pentagon Memorial

Story by Gary Sheftick

PRESIDENT George W. Bush dedicated the Pentagon Memorial Sept. 11, saying the nation will never forget the sacrifice and heroism there following the terrorist attack seven years ago.

"Pentagon employees ran into smoke-filled rooms to guide their friends to safety," Bush said.

"One of the worst days in America's history saw some of the bravest acts in America's history."

Following his speech, servicemembers pulled blue coverings off the 184 engraved benches in the memorial—one dedicated to each person who died when terrorists crashed American Airlines Flight 77 into the building. Children chanted from J.W. Alvey Elementary School, as the Singing Sergeants of the Air Force joined the U.S. Army Chorus and the Naval Academy Chorus in singing tributes.

Earlier in the morning, two servicemembers read the 184 names of those who perished over the public address system as a photo of each casualty was flashed on a large screen. After each name, a bell tolled.

Doris Brunelle said it was like a knife piercing her heart when she saw the photo of her brother, retired Master Sgt. Max Beilke. He worked for the Army Personnel Command and was attending a meeting in the Pentagon with the day's senior-ranking casualty, Lt.

Gen. Timothy J. Maude, deputy chief of staff for personnel, when the plane hit just a few feet from their conference room.

Beilke had been credited as being the last American combat Soldier to leave Vietnam in 1973



President George W. Bush speaks to thousands gathered to watch the dedication of the Pentagon Memorial Sept. 11, as servicemembers in the background wait to unveil the 184 engraved benches that represent the 184 lives lost on the site seven years ago.

and his sister Doris said she hoped today's ceremony reminded everyone that "freedom is not free." She said the memorial—with narrow pools of water under each rising slab with engraved names—was a "fitting tribute" to her brother and all who gave their lives.

"Today we are dedicating a profoundly moving memorial," said Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon R. England in the first remarks following the Prelude Concert. He said the Pentagon Memorial will in time attract millions, inspiring all who visit it to reflect. He added that he hoped it would help many find "inner peace."

Following "Taps," a bagpipe player pumped "Amazing Grace" as he walked through the new memorial—past the bench dedicated to 3-year-old Dana Falkenberg who was on the airliner, and on the other side, past the one for 71-year-old John D. Yamnicky, the oldest one who lost his life that day.

The memorial reflects "an undying commitment to honor and remember those who died," said Maj. Gen. Douglas C. Carver, chief of Army chaplains, as he gave the invocation. He said the "unbroken spirit and resolve of the American people" promise to "raise up beauty out of ashes" and give all hope.

James J. Laychak, chairman of the board for the Pentagon Memorial Fund, said he would like people to remember the feeling of unity and cooperation that "swept through the country" following Sept. 11, 2001. He lost his brother, David W. Laychak, in the Pentagon that day, but said "today is a day to celebrate life."

Laychak worked for five years to raise the funds to build the Pen-

2001, acts
the lives of
World Trade
ork City, in a
Shankesville,
and here at the

1968 • Paul W. Ambrose
1973 • SPC Craig S. Amundson, USA
1973 • YN3 Melissa Rose Barnes, USA
1932 • MSG Max J. Beilke, USA, Retired
1966 • Yeneneh Betru
1977 • IT2 Kris Romeo Bishundat, USA
1953 • Carrie R. Blagburn
1948 • COL Canfield D. Boone, USA
1936 • Mary Jane Booth
1958 • Donna M. Bowen
1970 • Allen P. Boyd
1960 • [Name obscured]

tagon Memorial and he thanked all who donated. He said the memorial was designed to be a “place of solace, peace and healing.” He said when he sees the reflecting sunshine climb up the monuments, he feels hope, and would like all visitors to feel that sense of hope.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said the memorial will be “an eternal reminder” of the valor of the men and women “who saw flame and smoke and stepped forward” to help. He said a symbol of American strength—the Pentagon—was scarred that day, a day he called “one of the darkest” in American history. But, he said, through the darkness, “America rediscovered its special grace,” a tremendous capacity for goodwill and sacrifice.

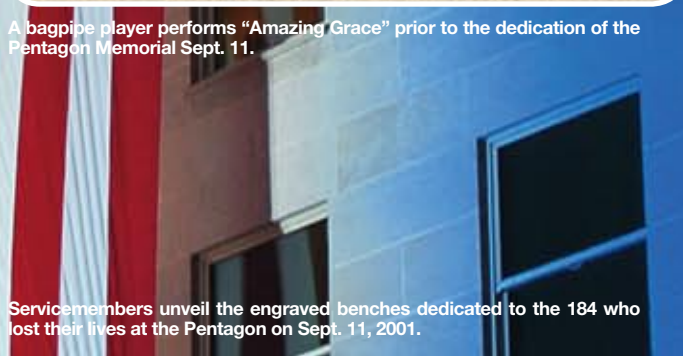
“The events of 9/11 still burn, still singe our memories,” said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen. Despite that, he said it is still a “healing” experience to return to the site and remember. He described the memorial as a “vision spot.”

“We claim this hallowed ground for peace and healing,” said Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

His predecessor, Rumsfeld, had said the Pentagon became a battlefield the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. Gates added, however, that the site now was not one that depicted the ruins of battle, but instead one that reflected the “fortifications of memory, love and resolve.” **sm**



A bagpipe player performs “Amazing Grace” prior to the dedication of the Pentagon Memorial Sept. 11.



Servicemembers unveil the engraved benches dedicated to the 184 who lost their lives at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.



G-1 Pentagon employees remember fallen



Story by C. Todd Lopez

The military and civilian employees of the Army's G-1 and Manpower and Reserve Affairs offices who were killed during the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon are part of a memorial near the G-1's office in the building.

ONE survivor of the attack on the Pentagon said she couldn't cry for more than two years after the event—and today, it still seems unreal.

"Why did this happen? It was so unnecessary for so many people to die," said Mary Lou Bradley, who works for the Army's G-1 (Personnel). "It took me a long time to come to terms with it. For two and a half years I could not cry—seven years later it feels like it's a bad dream and I'm going to wake up tomorrow in 2001 and everybody will be here."

Bradley was among the many who gathered during a ceremony Sept. 11 to remember the 29 Soldiers and civilians who were lost from the Army's G-1 and Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) during the terrorist attack seven years ago.

Lieutenant Gen. Michael D. Rochelle, the deputy chief of staff for G-1, spoke to the dozens of Soldiers, Army civilians and family members gathered near the G-1 offices in the Pentagon.

"United in purpose, we con-

tinue to grieve for the victims of September 11, and feel for families and friends who lost loved ones," he said. "We will long remember the heroes who emerged from the tragedies of those attacks, and will fight the good fight against a global network of terrorism for as long as it takes to end its threat to America and all civilized nations."

The G-1 now maintains a memorial to those lost during the terrorist attack. It features the names of those lost, their photos and the date. During the memorial ceremony, a wreath was placed in front of the memorial.

Lois Stevens, a friend and coworker of Bradley, has worked in the Pentagon for more than 30 years now. She said walking past the G-1 and M&RA memorial gives her pause—time to reflect and remember her coworkers.

"You remember the last thing that a person said to you," she said. "It's a reminder—I like that memorial very much. One lady, Marian Serva, was our congressional person. When the congressional season gets going, really going—I'm kind of thinking, oh Marian, help us out. And I miss her. I talked to her that morning. You think about each one every day."

Bradley has also visited the new Pentagon Memorial, which is right outside the offices of the Army G-1. She said the memorial is a good place to sit and think, to remember those who were lost.

"If you go out there it's very peaceful, even when the planes fly over, it's not really loud," she said. "And you can sit out there and think. I went out the other day, and went through almost the whole memorial looking for the benches for nine G-1 people. I found them. I sat out there and—you remember the people when they were alive. You remember the good things about them. I think that's what the purpose of the memorial is. You can reflect." **sm**

Providing Security for the Democratic National Convention

Story and Photo by Heike Hasenauer

IN July, 40 Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 1st Space Brigade's 117th Space Battalion monitored computer images, uploaded data and reviewed map printouts as they prepared for crowds expected for the August Democratic National Convention in Denver.

Another group of Soldiers who were part of Joint Task Force-National Democratic Convention stood up months earlier, donned riot gear at a military-operations-on-urban-terrain-site at nearby Fort Carson, Colo., and practiced for the unit's more traditional National Guard role: maintaining civil order.

"If there are demonstrations, these National Guard Soldiers will have to protect people and businesses from protests that could get out of hand," battalion commander Lt. Col. Don Laucirica said.

If there had been an incident involving thousands of people at the 45,000-person-capacity Invesco Field in Denver, the civil-disturbance training could have helped quell it, said Maj. Tod Fenner, who'd been designated team leader for the Army space support team tasked to support JTF-DNC.

"We could provide imagery of the area that we have in our existing databases; computer applications

allow the "space Soldiers" to access the existing imagery and create three-dimensional views," Laucirica said.

If the Soldiers had to extract someone by helicopter, "we could provide flight routes, so the pilot would know what buildings he'd have to maneuver around," he added.

"Our Soldiers in the 'turtle suits' (protective gear) will have a very different mission from those performing the space-operations role," he continued.

"It's very much as it is in Iraq; we could have a team at Central Command headquarters in Florida and a team in Iraq to support Soldiers who have very different needs." **sm**



117th Space Bn. Soldiers in Colorado Springs man the Joint Operations Center-Democratic National Convention during an exercise in July, in preparation for the August event.

Providing Security for the

Story by Pvt. Cassandra Monroe

LIKE the Democratic National Convention, the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., in September, was designated a National Special Security Event by the Department of Homeland Security, which means it was of heightened national interest and required high levels of security.

To satisfy the increased security requirements, authorities established a military joint task force, includ-

ing approximately 1,600 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen from active-duty, Reserve and National Guard units.

The task force played an important role in freeing up local law enforcement personnel so they could focus on higher law enforcement requirements, said Brig. Gen. Joseph Kelly, Joint Task Force Republican National Convention commander and assistant adjutant general of the Min-

nesota National Guard.

"This is a unique event and the National Guard is doing what it always does, which is to be there to help civil authorities and back them up when there is an event that requires more capabilities than what they can handle," said Kelly.

Servicemembers' specialties ranged from explosive ordnance disposal and explosive-detection dog teams to a Marine Corps chemical-

RNC



Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo

Minnesota National Guard Soldiers with the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor stand guard to assist St. Paul Police in maintaining order during an overly-aggressive demonstration Sept. 1, 2008, in St. Paul, Minn. The demonstrators were protesting during day one of the Republican National Convention.



Republican National Convention

biological-incident response force and security forces.

That expertise came in handy the afternoon of Sept. 1, when the St. Paul Police Department requested that 150 Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor assist them with crowd control downtown, after demonstrators became increasingly aggressive.

“Our main mission was to sup-

port local law enforcement,” said 1st Lt. T. Zdon, an armor officer with the unit. The Soldiers provided assistance in two key ways, said Zdon. “One: we provided a good number of forces used to support them. Two: we provided a good military presence.”

The 1-194th also provided Soldiers who could assist with riot control tactics to keep crowds under control.

“We trained for a couple days,

learning how each squad has an assigned task,” said Spc. Ben Doran. “We generally work together and support each other, using shields and batons to keep crowds back. We want to use the minimum amount of force necessary to complete the mission.”

Officials said the response time of the 150 Soldiers was remarkable, and the effect of their presence was evident in the quelling of the demonstrators. **sm**



Master Sgt. Ceclio Ricardo

Pvt. Cassandra Monroe serves with the 135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Iowa National Guard.



Master Sgt. Edwin Holt

1969



'Donut Dollies'

at the DMZ

Story by Elizabeth M. Collins

CHRISTMAS Eve 1969 was a cold and lonely holiday for a group of Soldiers on the Korean Peninsula. Instead of celebrating with families, they spent the night in their foxholes guarding the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.



Patricia Moran (now Lorge) and other Red Cross Donut Dollies serve coffee to U.S. service members and Korean nationals in 1969. Donut Dollies deployed to Korea and Vietnam to bring a taste of home to the troops. (Photo courtesy of Patricia E. Lorge)

It was lonely, that is, until young American women from the Red Cross called "Donut Dollies" arrived in the field, bearing comfort, cheer, hot coffee and fresh donuts.

One of the Red Cross "girls," as

they were also called, was my mother, Patricia Moran (now Lorge), who served in South Korea in 1969-1970, and again in 1972-1973 as a program supervisor.

She and eight other women worked for the 2nd Infantry Division unit of the Red Cross' Supplemental Recreation Activities Overseas program, designed to boost troop morale with refreshments and entertainment programs.

"The Red Cross recreation programs in South Vietnam and Korea encourage active Soldier participation in activities that provide a relaxing break...and keep young Americans in touch with home. Quizzes, skits, music, informative discussion groups, and general fun programs are the order of the day when the 'chopper' sets down with its team of Red

Cross girls," read a 1969 newspaper clipping my mother gave me.

According to the Red Cross Museum, a total of 899 Donut Dollies served in South Korea from 1953 to 1973, traveling almost three million miles by jeep and helicopter. Another 627 served with the SRAO in Vietnam from 1962 to 1973.

Mom's base camp was Camp Pelham at Musan, near the Imjin

River and approximately five miles from the DMZ.

She was later assigned to four of the other 10 SRAO units in Korea, but Christmas at the DMZ was one of her most memorable experiences.

She's told me many times that she would never forget the looks on the faces of those Soldiers. They were the only American women most of them had seen since leaving the States, and the Soldiers were stunned and thrilled that American girls would travel so far to spend Christmas with them.

"It was quite a treat," she remembered.

Donut Dollies in the 2nd Inf. Div. traveled 20-50 miles a day to entertain 10-100 Soldiers. An average week included at least 75 program stops, according to a 1969 unit description.

In addition, the Red Cross girls hosted a weekly radio program on Armed Forces Korea Network Radio, distributed about 600 birthday cards a month and – of course – 11,000 to 15,000 donuts a month.

"The Red Cross classified us as recreation workers," Mom said. "The informal, casual term most often used by the GI's was Donut Dolly. The name was given to us because everywhere we went, we took donuts, fresh baked daily by Korean bakers, for the troops. This was, no doubt,



meant to bring a little bit of home to the troops."

They more than succeeded. "Military commands termed the services of the Red Cross 'indispensable' and a 'prime factor' in their efforts to maintain the morale of their men at a high level and to look after their welfare," according to Sharon Lewis Dickerson on the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation Web site.

Mom was recruited by the Red Cross right after college. Given a choice between Korea or Vietnam, she chose Korea because her brother was leaving for a tour in Vietnam as a Marine helicopter pilot.

"I remember thinking I could not do that to my mother," she said. "There was no pressure, but I really think (my parents) never believed I would go through with it." So while Mom served coffee on the DMZ that Christmas, my grandmother spent the holiday listening to Elvis' "Blue Christmas."

It wasn't Vietnam, but South Korea in the late 1960s and early 1970s was not an easy assignment. Almost 20 years after the cease-fire ending the Korean War in 1953, the Korean Peninsula still resembled a war-zone, with frequent border skirmishes and international incidents.

On Jan. 23, 1968, for example, the North Koreans attacked the USS Pueblo, a U.S. Navy spy ship in international waters. One American was killed, several were wounded and the rest of the crew was held prisoner for almost a year.

Because of the tensions, my mother said Donut Dollies always traveled with an armed escort in sandbagged trucks with "flak" jackets and helmets when north of the Imjin River.

Living conditions were also somewhat primitive: "Our 'hooch,' has central heating – sometimes; hot water – sometimes; and electricity – sometimes. We have a fireplace which we use when we can get dry wood," said the unit description.

Because of the conditions, the Red Cross girls received hardship allowances, but Mom said these dif-

ficulties paled in contrast to the new culture. They were treated well by Soldiers and Koreans alike and often dined on pheasant under glass and other delicacies.

She said they never felt in danger. "It was too much fun. More exciting than anything else. I can't think of anyone who was worried.

"It was the best job I've ever had. Everything else pales in comparison. Nothing was routine. We were in a foreign country and were able to travel all the time and meet interesting people. Opportunities most people would never have, to go places and do things I would never have dreamed of," she said.

She was back in Seoul in 1973 as a supervisor when the Red Cross ended the program – in Vietnam because the United States was pulling out, and in Korea because the situation had stabilized somewhat.

"We went to the troops; we visited small, isolated locations, where they didn't have a chance to go anywhere or relax," she said. "By 1973, I think, units had more of a

Patricia Moran (now Lorge) enjoys a Korean banquet circa 1970. As the only American women for miles around, Donut Dollies in Korea cheered up U.S. troops and were invited to all the parties hosted by units and local nationals. (Photo courtesy of Patricia E. Lorge)



chance to stay in one place and the Army started building more permanent recreation centers. The program sort of wore itself out.

"It was the time of my life." *(The original version of this report appeared in the "Monmouth Message" from Fort Monmouth, N.J. For information on Korea today, see the August 2008 issue of "Soldiers.") sm*

A Donut Dolly brings Soldiers in the field coffee and donuts, circa 1965-1966. (Photo by Spc. William L. Engstrom, 2nd Brigade Correspondent)





Yakima Training Center, Wash.

Soldiers from the 17th Fires Brigade, fire an M-198, 155mm howitzer during an exercise.

— Photo by Spc. Lucas T. Swihart





Staff Sgt. James Gibson scans the terrain while his battle buddies keep a watchful eye from the water during training on Camp Atterbury, Ind.



Sgt. Sheila Hollifield

'Year of NCO' announced

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren has announced that 2009 will be the "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer."

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer," Geren said during his keynote address at the opening of the 2008 Association of the United States Army annual meeting and exposition.

"They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their Soldiers," Geren said of NCOs.

The secretary said that during the year, the Army will accelerate NCO development of strategic initiatives, develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability, and utilization of the NCO corps, showcase the NCO story to the Army and the American people, and honor the sacrifices and contributions of the NCO corps, past and present.

"Today's NCO operates autonomously, and always with confidence and competence," he said. "Our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCO in the world, and most advanced armies in the world today are going to school on our model."

— C. Todd Lopez, ARNEWS

Guard, Reserve Soldiers named best warriors

Two Soldiers, both from the reserve components, have been named the Army's best warriors for 2008.

Staff Sgt. Michael T. Noyce Merino, Army National Guard, was selected as the Army's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. David R. Obray, U.S. Army Reserve, was named Soldier of the Year.

The two Soldiers, along with 22 of their peers — a total of two Soldiers from each of 12 Army major commands — competed for the titles during the "Army's Best Warrior Competition," Sept. 29 to Oct. 3 at Fort Lee, Va. The competition is in its seventh year.

While this is not the first time a member of the reserve component has won — two years ago an activated Army Reserve specialist won Soldier of the Year while competing for U.S. Army, Europe—it is the first time both the NCO and Soldier

of the Year came from the reserve components.

"This is a direct reflection of the goodness of what the National Guard and Army Reserve provide for the Army," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston. "It's the civilian-acquired skills, the education, that our Soldiers, our citizen-Soldiers bring to the fight every day that makes us who we are."

The week-long competition includes events designed to test a Soldier's mettle in areas like land navigation and physical fitness, as well as their knowledge of various warrior tasks and battle drills. The competition asks Soldiers to show their ability to complete the tasks most often needed in battle in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"A lot of competitors, especially the NCOs, were just extremely skilled Soldiers," Noyce Merino said. "I felt honored to be competing against them."

— C. Todd Lopez, ARNEWS



C. Todd Lopez

Spc. David Obray, Army Reserve, and Staff Sgt. Michael Noyce Merino, Army National Guard, practice adjusting the head spacing and timing on an M-2 .50-caliber machine gun during the Army's Best Warrior Competition.

Army fields new Stability Ops manual

The new Stability Operations manual, FM 3-07, was released to the field in October by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

“We recognize that in a contemporary operational environment in the 21st century, conventional military operations, offensive and defensive, will be conducted simultaneously with stability operations,” said TRADOC Commander, Gen. William Wallace. “Our hope is that FM 3-07 becomes a source document not just for the military and agencies within our government, but also non-governmental agencies with whom we routinely work.”

In the future, the Army will likely work abroad with other agencies to defeat insurgency, assist fragile states and provide vital humanitarian aid to the suffering, said Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

“At the heart of this effort is a comprehensive approach to stability operations that integrates the tools of statecraft with our military forces, international partners, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector,” Caldwell said.



Staff Sgt. Daniel Bishop

Pfc. Serena Norman, medic, tends to Iraqi children during a mission in al-Kut. Doctrine on stability operations such as this can be found in the Army's new field manual, FM 3-07.

Given the complexities of the future operating environment, the Army must look at the different ways the elements of national power (military, economic, diplomatic and information) are employed, according to the new manual. It states that military success alone will not be sufficient to prevail during a time of protracted confrontation among state, non-state and individual actors fueled by expanding religious extremism, competition for energy, globalization outcomes, climate and demographic

changes, and the increased use of violence to achieve political and ideological ends.

“Our objective when we go into a foreign country is to leave, but to leave with that country safe and secure,” said Caldwell. “If we work to ensure stability has returned, it will allow their people to live their lives in an orderly manner, feeling safe and secure.”

— John Harlow, TRADOC Public Affairs

Soldiers evaluate Future Combat Systems

Soldiers of the Army Evaluation Task Force have been testing and evaluating Future Combat System's Spin Out 1 equipment at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Sergeant 1st Class Joseph Hardy with the AETF — also known as 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division — said having FCS in the field would be like “having an extra man in your squad.”

Spin Out 1 systems include Unattended Ground Sensors, the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon, Small Unmanned Ground Vehicles, and an Unmanned Air Vehicle currently being evaluated by the AETF.

The capabilities of these systems “will deliver enhanced situational awareness,” Hardy said. The equipment, like the SUGV and UGS, makes it easier to clear an objective because a unit can focus on completing a mission instead of worrying about the Soldiers on rear-guard, he said.

“You don't have to leave a squad behind,” Hardy said.

The AETF mission of testing and evaluation is vital in determining where Soldiers want to go with the FCS equipment, Hardy said. Soldiers, both in the field and in AETF, provide valuable feedback on how to improve and better use existing FCS equipment.

Hardy used the example of the SUGV. Soldiers recommended a camera be put in the body of the robot, in addition to the head, so in the event the head was damaged, the robot could continue to operate.

Those recommendations were taken into consideration and the SUGV was soon updated with an in-body camera.

The experience that noncommissioned officers gain at AETF allows them to see how the myriad of FCS systems are connected, and helps them to understand how everything will relate in the field, Hardy said.

— Jacqueline M. Hames, ARNEWS

Holiday stories: Family away from family

Story by Staff Sgt. Robert Petersen

WELL for some Soldiers it is easy to be out on your own and away from home, but for others it is a very trying time being deployed.

There are so many things that are missed while you're away, especially when it's for 15 months. There are events such as birthdays, parties, your typical weekend off, your children's school and sporting events, anniversaries, and of course the holidays, that all go by out of normal routine during that time.

The best thing to do is to make the most out of it, and try not to get down during these times. The Army does a great job of trying to help the Soldiers adjust and keep active, but let's face it, it's just not the same as if they were celebrated with your immediate family.

One way to make the most out of the holiday season is to decorate. Yes it's true that there are many different religions, origins, ethnic backgrounds and traditions throughout the military, so make sure that it's all right with everyone and try to include a little bit of everything from everyone's preference. Luckily when my Soldiers and I celebrated the holiday season, we were able to agree on everything that was displayed, and it did bring a sense of calm to the shop.

Our plan for Christmas was one that is pretty common and practiced in a lot of work areas all over the place, not just the military. We decided to go the route of the "grab-bag" or "secret Santa" exchange. We placed all of the Soldiers' names that were participating, in a hat, (which was all eight of us) and then we picked names blindly. We had an agreement that we wouldn't over-spend, so we set a low dollar amount for gifts (which was completely voluntary).

So, right around Christmas Day we played our Christmas music on our shop computer and proceeded on to exchanging gifts. Everything went smooth, and it was a good day. It really brought up the spirits of the guys—we had a great time. There were some laughs, and it was truly a time of camaraderie. After everything was handed out, and all thanks were given, it was back to work as normal.

Of course the base dining facilities were very festive and they had decorations up and served traditional Christmas dishes. So if it's the home cooked meal that you're missing, they

do their best to cater to that. You can definitely go into the DFAC with an empty stomach and leave the place like you would as if you were at home. Granted, you can't just roll off of the dining chair onto a big comfy couch, but you can feel free to sit until closing time without actually being booted out. If it's the leftovers that you're missing, there's normally no problem with you getting a to-go plate so that you can make that turkey sandwich for lunch the next day.

So to all the Soldiers that I've had the great opportunity to celebrate the holiday seasons with: thank you for all of your hard work, for helping to make the most of the holidays, and for being the family away from my family. **sm**



Dear Santa,

Holiday stories: Christmas in Iraq

Story by James Allen

CHRISTMAS in Iraq was quite interesting. I was a Soldier in Bravo 1/5 FA stationed in Baghdad, Iraq. I remember spending the holiday on duty. However that isn't the focus of the story.

Being deployed in itself is always tough. However, spending Christmas away from loved ones back home is even harder. Because there weren't "special" days off, each holiday seemed like just another day at the office.

What made Christmas of 2006 special in Iraq was the kindness shown by strangers. Whilst on deployment I signed up with "Soldiers' Angels." Through that network, I met many amazing individuals that strove to make my time deployed as comfortable as possible.

My greatest memory of that otherwise mundane holiday was receiving letters, gifts and sweets made by my Soldiers' Angels. It was special because many of the gifts that were sent to me were timed to arrive around Christmas. There was nothing more rewarding than coming back off of shift to find a letter or package waiting for you.

The most significant accomplishment that resulted from Christmas of 2006 in Iraq was the creation of a poem that I wrote that would be later dedicated to a Soldier that lost his life in Iraq.

James Allen's original poem follows:

A Soldier's Sacrifice

*You are Brother, Father, Son, and friend
Sister, Mother, Wife, and Daughter
When the call to duty came
You answered, giving of yourself
You left the comforts of home
For the uncertainty of war
You said your goodbyes to those
that cared about you
What made you make this
sacrifice?
The answer is clear
You believed in what you were
doing
Selflessly you abandoned the
safety net of home
Cast aside your civilian life
Joined a greater cause
Some would say to liberate a
country
Free a people in bondage
The mission was dangerous
Your lives placed in peril
Knowing the possible outcome
you went anyway
Fighting against an unyielding
enemy
Spending sleepless nights
searching
For an enemy masked in darkness
Wondering if you would make it
home alive
You watched your battle
buddies die
Strangers you had met in the
beginning
Are now brothers in the end
For some, home will never be seen
again*

*A distant memory of the past
You will lay down your life to save
others
To protect your fellow Soldiers so
that they may live
For a better tomorrow
You make the greatest sacrifice
Giving up what is most dear
The life you could have lived
For those that are left behind;
There is no complaining
The questions will come later
Silent determination remains
The enemy will not win
There will be loss
Tears shed for those that will not
come home
Brothers in arms
The journey began as strangers
Now they are your brothers
Uniforms stained with blood and
tears
So determined to achieve victory
These proud Soldiers
Kindred spirits working together
For a greater good
This is for you who have sacrificed
so much
To make a stand for what you
believe in*

In memory of Spc. Benjamin
Ashley **sm**



Holiday stories: A supporter's perspective

Story by Nora Child

MY family adopted Pfc. Michael Fields-Bradley. Michael is in Iraq and he is 27 years old.

He was also trying to sign up one of his fellow Soldiers that he felt really needed some extra support. That touched my heart. I emailed him to ask for more information on his friend. He emailed back and continued to do so every time I emailed him. He was so kind and polite. He seemed to be reaching out for a friend so I took him under my wing and have been so thankful since then. He has become our household hero.

Michael is from Detroit. Being from Detroit he just has to be a Pistons fan. The Pistons were doing extremely well last year and Michael said he could smell a championship coming on for the Pistons. My family lives in San Antonio. Being in San

Antonio, we are Spurs fans all the way—Go Spurs, Go! I am trying hard to convert Michael to a Spurs fan but that is no easy task! We have sent him a few Spurs items. (Slowly breaking him in, I hope!)

One of the items that Michael mentioned he needed was a pillow. His was as flat as a pancake. We did send him a pillow, but also decided every new pillow needs a new pillowcase.

I looked a long time to find something with the Spurs and Pistons on it. I finally had to use wallpaper from the Detroit Pistons' Web site. The best one I could find was when the Pistons played the Spurs here in San Antonio on Jan. 10, 2008. Sadly for me, it was one of the games that the Spurs lost last year. Michael was shocked that I would send him a pillowcase with the Pistons beating the

Spurs on it. I told him it was NOT easy for me to do! I prayed the Spurs would win the March 14th game against the Pistons. They didn't.

Michael tells me the pillowcase is his favorite thing he has gotten so far. He tells me he sleeps with it every night and also takes it along on his missions!

We have grown to be good friends (with Michael) over the last nine months. We look forward to meeting Michael once he is back here in the USA.

I am so glad to have been able to boost this Soldier's morale. What he doesn't know is how big of an impact he has made on me and my family's life. I am so proud to be able to do my part to support the men and women who are deployed on our behalf. I am so proud of my Soldier, Pfc. Michael Fields-Bradley. **sm**



Holiday stories: Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. Phillip Andrew Smith

I was in Afghanistan in 2006 to March 2007 with the 35th Military Police Detachment.

During the Holidays it snowed a lot over there, I mean like a month straight it never seemed to stop. We had snowball fights, and in one instance it was the Army guys versus the Air Force guys (of course we ran all the Air Force guys out of the camp).



We built a snowman just to remind us of home. It had been a while since I'd built one and I felt like a kid again back home in Alabama (that is where I'm from, by the way, Jasper, Ala.).

For some reason they liked to pack the snow down in the camps with steam rollers so it was like you were ice skating every time you

stepped outside. I busted my butt so many times. We did have a party on Christmas—it was fun (it was only a few of us though).

Other than that I pretty much worked my way through the rest of the holidays. We just had to kind of do things that we did back home just to keep our morale and spirits up. **sm**





Holiday stories: Small thanks

Story by Tracy Van Oort

NOVEMBER 2006 changed me. Prior to then, I had been thankful for the American troops but not involved. But one fall day, I adopted a deployed Soldier and my involvement changed. Suddenly the sacrifices the Soldiers were making, and the dangers they faced every day, became real for me. I needed to do my part!

I have never been a Soldier myself but I imagine that the holidays get especially lonely when deployed overseas. The Soldiers miss out on simple holiday preparations and most of all they miss time with their families. That first year we wanted our Soldier to feel a part our preparations and celebrations. As we decorated our Christmas tree we took photos, emailing them so he would feel included in our celebration. We made candies and found presents to send. We discussed the sacrifices he was making while we wrapped the surprises my sons had selected. Our family wanted to ensure our Soldier did not feel forgotten.

My family has adopted many Soldiers since that time. We have had

the honor of writing these Soldiers weekly and sending care packages often. We've packed birthday parties in a box. My children have even had birthday parties in our house and taken pictures as they blew out candles and ate the cake that had been baked for our Soldiers. We celebrated the Soldiers on their special days!

Packing Christmas care packages brings special joy to our house. Last year we found four-foot-long Christmas stockings and little jingle bell trees to send. CDs of Christmas music by Elvis, Bing Crosby or Alvin and the Chipmunks were included. A DVD of "A Christmas Story" was packed. Santa hats, candy canes, chocolates and presents wrapped in holiday paper filled each box.

Our Sunday school class made banners and a big nine-foot paper pine tree. The seven-year-old kids stood in the hallways and encouraged church members to come in and write words of encouragement to the Soldiers on cardboard ornaments to be hung on their tree. We wanted to make sure the Soldiers felt loved,

appreciated, and remembered. The kids were thrilled when one Soldier emailed us photos showing the banner on display in Iraq.

In addition to sending care packages to the Soldiers, last Christmas my family also had the privilege of playing "Santa" to a couple military families with small children who would be spending the holidays without their daddy. It was important to us to let both the Soldiers and their families know that we understood the total sacrifice they were all making.

Since November 2006, I have become friends with some fantastic men and women serving in our military. I work to make sure they feel supported and know that their service does not go unnoticed. I now volunteer every week for Adopt A US Soldier, the organization that I initially joined to adopt that very first Soldier. I have yet to meet any of my adopted Soldiers face to face, but maybe someday I will have the opportunity to shake their hand, give them a hug and thank them in person for all they have done. **sm**

Holiday stories: Lifted spirits

Story by Staff Sgt. William Underwood

I was in Iraq for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years 2004. The holidays were one of the hardest times to be over here and I am dreading it already. You miss your family and friends every day, but the holidays are so much harder.

In 2004 I was deployed with the 458th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. We ran counter

IED patrols around Baghdad. The holidays were rough for us that year, as we had lost one of our Soldiers in an ambush.

A business in my hometown, Crutchfield (which is a home and auto electronics store), had contacted me about wanting to send us gifts for the holidays. They sent us portable DVD players and DVDs, which I was able to distribute to the guys in my unit in time for Christmas. It really lifted

our spirits. On Christmas Eve, I went around and put gifts on the guys' steps, so when they woke up they found the gifts. It brought a little bit of tradition from home to Iraq.

The Caughman family (Thomas Caughman was our Soldier who was killed) was in our thoughts as we went out on patrol that night. We all felt the pain of what that first Christmas without Tommy was like. He and his family remain in our thoughts. **sm**



Holiday war stories

Story by Elizabeth M. Collins

VETERANS remember their experiences from some of the conflicts that helped safeguard America. Their stories are of combat and support roles, surprise attacks and camp life, holiday celebrations and day-to-day experiences in the Army from World War II to today's war on terror.

World War II: Carrol Collins

If Soldiers invading Italy during World War II needed to eat, retired Master Sgt. Carrol Collins was the man to see.

Assigned to the 90th Quartermaster Railhead Company, Collins and his unit supplied food and forage (for mules from the 10th Mountain Division) for any troops who happened to

be in the area: sometimes two or three divisions, sometimes a corps headquarters, sometimes even Army headquarters.

"We had the food. We issued it daily to the mess sergeants. They'd come in and pick up the rations for the troops. Then at night, we'd get some more in. The next day we'd ship it out. We'd leapfrog and stay behind as long as there were troops in the area. As the troops advanced, we'd go up to support the frontline troops. Then the line advanced and we'd eventually be back to supporting the rear-line troops," Collins said.

During WWII, there were two types of early meals-ready-to eat: C- and K-rations. According to Collins, C-rations consisted of two cans



Vietnam, 1970—"Santa Claus" talks with a group of hospital patients during the Bob Hope Christmas Show. (Photo courtesy of the Center for Military History)

for each meal: one with some kind of hash, beans or stew and the other with dried biscuits, instant coffee and powdered milk. No one liked them, he said.

Instead, the slightly-more edible K-rations were preferred. Closer to the modern MRE, they were small boxes with a can of meat, crackers, candy bars, cigarettes, matches and even toilet paper.

These were supplemented by local Italian fare, including wine. The cooks took special care of the troops on holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, although Collins said that otherwise it was work, and meals, as usual.

Armed Forces Retirement Home



Carrol Collins (above) as a young Soldier in World War II. He eventually deployed to Korea as well.

Carrol Collins (below) reminisces about delivering food for Soldiers during World War II.



Photo by Elizabeth M. Collins



Frederick McClellan Sr. shows his hands, which were badly frostbitten during the Korean War.

Collins said the men frequently went into local towns when they had rare off-duty time or walked around the countryside to get away from the military. The rest of the time was usually spent playing cards or reading.

While busy making sure the troops were fed, Collins said he was usually behind the front lines except during the invasion of Italy, when a nervous Dutch sea captain deposited them on-shore four days early.

"We were supposed to land at D plus four," he said. "D was the day of landing plus four days. Well, H-hour was about two or three o'clock in the morning. That was the initial landing. We landed at H plus four hours. We walked through the water up onto the sand and they were shooting at us. It wasn't scary because we didn't realize how much danger we were in."

After the war, Collins briefly left the Army before reenlisting with a counterintelligence specialty. He went on to interview refugees during the Korean War, earning the Bronze Star and later the Distinguished Service Medal.

Korean War: Frederick McClellan Sr.

Instead of opening presents, sitting down to a big dinner or attending

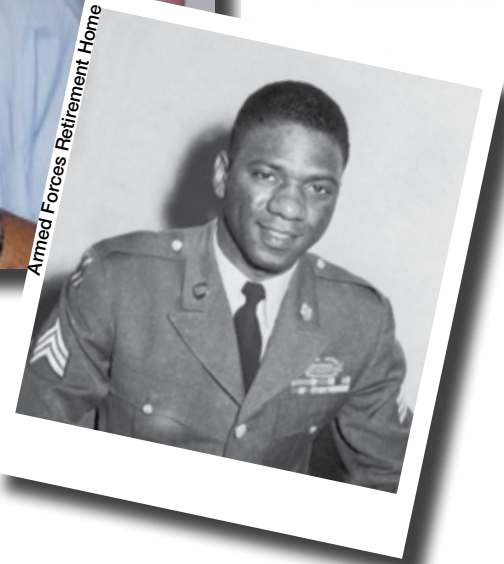
religious services, retired Sgt. 1st Class Frederick McClellan Sr. spent Christmas 1950 on a hillside in Korea pretending to be dead.

After first serving in Japan, he was discharged on June 24, 1950. The war in Korea started the next day, and he decided to reenlist. McClellan wanted to go to war with his buddies from the occupation of Japan, but not only was he assigned to a different unit, he became the point man, which meant he had to walk 10 to 15 yards in front of the rest of his squad, constantly exposed to the enemy.

"It was real scary," he said of the squad's almost nightly patrols. "I was trying to make contact with the enemy."

Instead, the enemy found him on Dec. 25, 1950. But he wasn't on patrol and most of his unit was asleep when Chinese soldiers overran their position.

Stationed at the top of a hill, all of the machine gunners were practically killed in their sleeping bags, he said. Part way down the hill, McClellan heard their screams and had time to roll out of his sleeping bag and stretch out on the frozen ground, to keep a low profile.



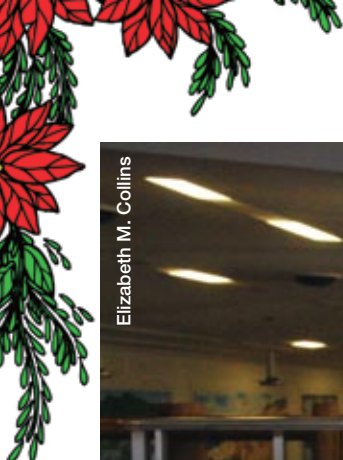
Frederick McClellan Sr. (above) as a sergeant. The retired Soldier was almost killed by Chinese soldiers during the Korean War.

"All I was thinking was that if they see me, they're going to come over and bayonet me or shoot me to make sure I'm dead. So I just started praying and hoping that they'd never see me."

If he fixed bayonet and charged the Chinese, he knew he would die. If he ran back toward his unit at the bottom of the hill, he knew they might mistake him for the enemy and shoot him.

Of the seven men on that hill, he was the only one who walked off, after laying motionless for about three hours without gloves in subzero temperatures. The resulting frostbite was so severe that doctors told him if he had been outside another 15 minutes, he would have lost his hands.

He was evacuated to Japan after only four months in Korea and was awarded the Purple Heart, before



Elizabeth M. Collins

Richard W. Robinson remembers serving with the 8th Army during the Korean War.

spending the rest of his career in the Army and civil service. McClellan still takes pain medication for his hands and has post-traumatic stress disorder from the attack.

Korean War: Richard W. Robinson

Richard W. Robinson held a little-known job during a little-known war.

The retired sergeant major spent the majority of his 18-month deployment during the Korean War holed up in a classified-message center. His job was to make sure combat units in the field got crucial intelligence and operation reports.

"There was two of us. We worked every other night. The night I was off, I'd go in and help (him) clean for the day, then I'd go home. He'd sleep there and at 5:00 in the morning the intelligence reports would come in and right after that at 5:30, the operations reports would come in. The next night I would come in and he would help me and then he'd take off and I'd sleep there and do the morning, get everything ready.

"We had three corps. I'd say probably six or seven or eight divisions, plus the 1st Marine Division,

that got all this stuff. But it was essential that they all got it by 10 in the morning," Robinson remembered.

Although the sound of artillery was a constant presence and there were few ways to relax and unwind, Robinson said he felt fortunate to have showers, clean clothes and decent food. His best friend was on the front lines and when he visited Seoul, Korea, on a pass during the holidays, he hadn't seen a real shower or clean clothes in at least a month.

Like other veterans, Robinson said the holidays were just like any other workday, although he remembered a cardinal visited once to say Mass for Catholic Soldiers.

Fifteen years later, in January 1968, Robinson thought the war was about to start again. Assigned to Korea again, he was about to return to the United States on leave when North Korea attacked the USS Pueblo, a Navy spy ship in international waters, killed one Sailor and held 82 others captive for 11 months. Further hostilities were avoided, but Robinson said all Soldiers were issued weapons and spent months on alert.



Richard W. Robinson (above) as a young Soldier. He eventually retired as a sergeant major.

Vietnam War: Michael J. Longwell

While many young men were avoiding the draft by any means possible, retired Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Longwell volunteered for all three of his tours in Vietnam in 1966-1967, 1968 and 1971-1972.

"When I first went to Vietnam, I'd already been in the Army three years, then got out and went back in. This guy said, 'Why are you here? You already were in the service, you didn't have to worry about being drafted.' I said, 'I'm here because I love my country,'" Longwell said, later adding that he was also "young and stupid."

Although he was assigned as a supply clerk during his first tour, like most Soldiers, he frequently had guard duty and occasionally went out on patrols. He thanks God that they never saw any action, although

shortly after he returned to the States his unit was attacked.

Longwell also tried to extend for another six months as an infantry Soldier after his first 12 months, but it turned out that the Army thought something was wrong with his eyes and didn't want him. The friend he was supposed to join ended up losing a leg.

"I really believe now that maybe somebody upstairs was looking out for me and didn't want me to go," he said. "'Charlie' was good at mortaring us. You'd be sleeping in the middle of the night or on guard duty or whatever and all of a sudden 'shush, shush.' He liked that. He was very good at that and by the time they got reactionary forces to find him, he was gone."

At the end of his third tour at the Directorate of Logistics, the Viet Cong started shelling their headquarters during the day, something Longwell said made him very nervous. He spent his final two weeks carrying a weapon at all times, although with his own room, he said that tour was comparatively easy.

There was usually little to do when off duty, although they occasionally had barbecues. Longwell

said that Christmas was especially nice, and added there was always a tree and a special meal. The Red Cross or Salvation Army usually provided care packages as well.

Longwell said one of the most difficult parts of the war for him was dealing with people's reactions when he got home.

"I can remember telling somebody that I just got back from Vietnam, and they looked at me in disgust. If you went to Vietnam, oh man, they didn't like you. (They would ask) 'What's wrong with you? How could you go there?'"

Operation Iraqi Freedom: Andrew D. Swilling

With three deployments to Iraq under his belt, Staff Sgt. Andrew D. Swilling, a military policeman with the 3rd Infantry Division's 293rd MP Company, has seen the war go from invasion to insurgency to surge to relative calm.

Of the three, his most recent tour, from November 2006 to February 2008, sticks with him most. Located in Muqdadiyah in Diyala Province in northern Iraq, he said it was particularly violent. With the town taken over by insurgents and only one route

back to the main base, they were fairly easy targets.

"For about 10 months it was a fight every day," Swilling said. "Someone was getting hit every single day. A lot of people were injured. It was a nasty situation. A lot of times it was very scary. But it's one of those things that nobody lets on to. The last thing you want someone to think is that you're scared. Everyone else who's with you is thinking the same thing. They don't want their buddies to think that they're scared."

There were several attacks that should have killed him, Swilling said. One improvised explosive device blew the back off his vehicle. Another detonated next to his seat and was so strong it burned all the hair off his gunner's arms. No one was seriously hurt either time, a fact that still amazes Swilling.

Michael J. Longwell today, talking about his three Vietnam deployments.



Elizabeth M. Collins



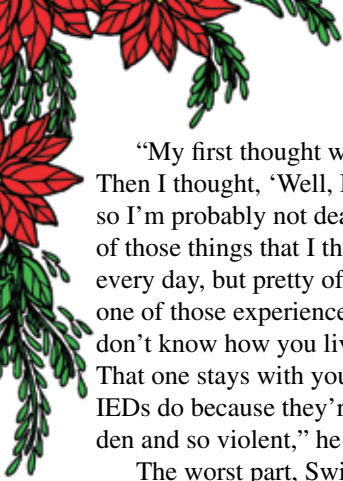
Armed Forces Retirement Home

Michael J. Longwell (above) at the beginning of his Army service.

Michael J. Longwell (below) as a sergeant first class. He volunteered for three tours in Vietnam.



Armed Forces Retirement Home



“My first thought was, ‘I’m dead.’ Then I thought, ‘Well, I’m thinking, so I’m probably not dead.’ It’s one of those things that I think about, not every day, but pretty often. It was just one of those experiences where you don’t know how you lived through it. That one stays with you. A lot of the IEDs do because they’re just so sudden and so violent,” he said.

The worst part, Swilling said, was knowing that every time they left their base, something was probably going to happen. He couldn’t even entirely blame the insurgents, because he knew many of them were only there because al Qaeda threatened their families.

And then, the surge came to Diyala and Swilling said things changed overnight. Al Qaeda disappeared, roads were safe and markets re-opened. It was a huge relief, he said, especially because he volunteered for two of his assignments, in part because of his Soldiers. He said he was supposed to lead them, but instead they constantly amazed him with their bravery and dedication.

It was worth eating the same meals over and over again, although according to Swilling, the food improved after his first deployment, when he had meals-ready-to-eat for months at a time. Swilling said Soldiers got so sick of them that they started buying food from Iraqis: kebobs, chicken and even pizza.

There were special shipments of food for holidays, however. According to Swilling the chow hall put on a huge spread at Christmas, and Soldiers were able to relax and play games instead of heading out on patrol. A small shopette had everything they needed, or Soldiers could go to several stores on base run by Iraqis. And unlike Soldiers before him, phones and Internet provided instant connections home. **sm**

Photos courtesy of Staff Sgt. Andrew D. Swilling



Staff Sgt. Andrew Swilling (center), and fellow Soldiers break during a clearing operation in the village of Khala, south of Wajihyah (Diyala Province) with 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.





Staff Sgt. Andrew Swilling during a raid with an Iraqi SWAT team in 2008.



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Fort Irwin rock art

Geoglyphs reveal land's early history

By James Williams and Neal Snyder

AT first glance, California's Mojave Desert might seem barren and devoid of humanity. But look again, and you'll see what Luz Ramirez de Bryson sees.

"The past and present all merge into one," said Ramirez, archaeologist and cultural resources manager for Fort Irwin, Calif. "One can almost see the early people moving through this area," she said.

Where the untrained eye takes in an almost alien landscape of dry shrub and stone, Ramirez points to places where water flowed and the ancient, nomadic Silver Lake people lived their lives some 7,000 to 8,000 years ago.

They were one of many cultures that used the land and left records in the rock. Years ago, archaeologists working on Fort Irwin found petroglyphs, images chipped and scraped into rock formations; and pictographs, paintings on rock. But in the newly acquired areas of Fort Irwin, Ramirez found another form of rock art, one she recognized from her experience studying the high desert of Chile: geoglyphs.

Also known as intaglios, geoglyphs mark the land itself for an artistic purpose. The most famous are the lines in Peru's Nazca desert, where, from the air, one can see monkeys, birds and lines once thought to be landing strips for extraterrestrials. A famous human figure lies in the Mojave near Blythe, Calif., less than two hours south of Fort Irwin.

The Fort Irwin geoglyphs are abstract alignments of fist-sized rocks covering perhaps a quarter of an acre.

One set is a collection of seemingly random straight lines; another swirls and branches in a deliberate but undecipherable pattern.

Embedded in the sun-darkened crust called desert pavement, the lines are practically invisible until Ramirez begins to describe them. Before she brought her Chilean-trained eye to the site, researchers had found only small rock circles. Artifacts and oxidation of the rocks give clues about the formation's age.

"One of the attractions for me is this land is so revealing, and very predictable," Ramirez said. In the desert, "you can see every scar, every signal, everything that's happened here. It's all laid out."

Ramirez refuses to make more than the most general speculations about the meaning of the lines: designating a meeting place for nomadic families, perhaps, or some form of ceremony. Some broken quartzite found on the site points to the latter, she said. "You know, it's all speculation because really I have no idea."

Meanings are tied to culture. "After contact with the Europeans a lot of the stories that come down through song and story to tell the newcomers or the youngsters in the area are forgotten, so it's very difficult to know what the rock meant," Ramirez said.

As with other significant rock art and prehistoric sites on post, Fort Irwin will protect the geoglyphs. Soldiers will learn how to recognize and avoid damage to the sites, but they won't know their exact locations. Training will incorporate the fenced-off areas as contaminated sites or similar no-trespassing zones. Archaeologists and other interested people will be able to visit the sites on guided tours.

"We have to look at it from the perspective that if we have something special we should protect it," Ramirez says. "Also, I think it's important to support the Army and its activities because it protects our country." **sm**

James Williams and Neal Snyder work for the U.S. Army Environmental Command.



Neal Snyder

Fort Irwin, Calif., archaeologist and cultural resources chief Luz Ramirez de Bryson traces a geoglyph formation in the expansion area.



Honoring servicemembers

ONE STITCH AT A TIME

THEY can be symbols of patience, hope and worry, or of honor, grief and the ultimate sacrifice.

They are service-star banners, which date back to World War I. Family members hang them in windows to honor loved ones serving or lost in combat – blue for living, gold for killed in action.

Former Marine Rod Raubeson, a Vietnam-era veteran, has sewn more than 3,500 such banners on a 70-year-old Singer sewing machine for families of servicemembers deployed to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

He was inspired when he tried to find a blue-star banner four years ago for a friend who was about to deploy.

“I went shopping for them and all they had available were the single-sheet, plastic printed (ones), and I didn’t think that was really appropriate,” he said. “So I made one of the banners myself, and I got started that way.

“I just really enjoyed doing the banner and I thought it was one small way I could honor the families who do have their loved ones overseas.”

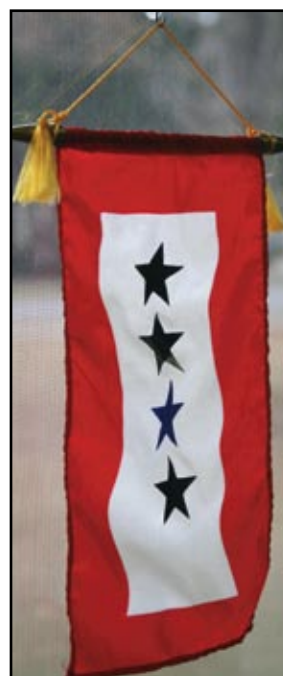
Each banner measures 12 by 17 inches. On a busy, 12-hour day, Raubeson can make 10-12 banners, including painting the wooden hangers, which come from small flags used to decorate veterans’ graves. Each banner takes about 75 to 90 minutes to complete.

He buys the fabric in 12- to 18-yard pieces and has about seven pieces of the red fabric alone on hand.

“Fiskars (rotary cutters) must love me. I go through a blade about



Courtesy of Rod Raubeson



Rod Raubeson sews a blue-star banner on a 70-year-old sewing machine at his Massachusetts home. (Right) A four-star service flag hangs in a window. Each star on a service flag represents a family member serving during a time of war. (Flag photo by Marine Cpl. Micah Snead)

every three days. That and the thread company,” Raubeson said.

While he does accept donations, and is in talks with Singer for supplies, he doesn’t have any partnerships to help with the cost of materials or shipping, and the banners are gifts to the families. Raubeson declined to say how much of his own money he’s put into the project.

“It’s just amazing the way that people have responded to the banners,” he said. “It’s really heartwarming to get the thank-you notes and the different comments that have been made. Some of it’s just so hard to share because it’s personal. I try not to exploit the fact that these families receive banners, so I’m kind of sensitive about it.”

Raubeson is deeply attached to his banners and the people who receive them. A picture of Marine Cpl. Brian Prening, who was killed in Iraq after just two months of combat, sits in his sewing basket, a reminder of why he sews.

He also remembers one very special banner with three stars.

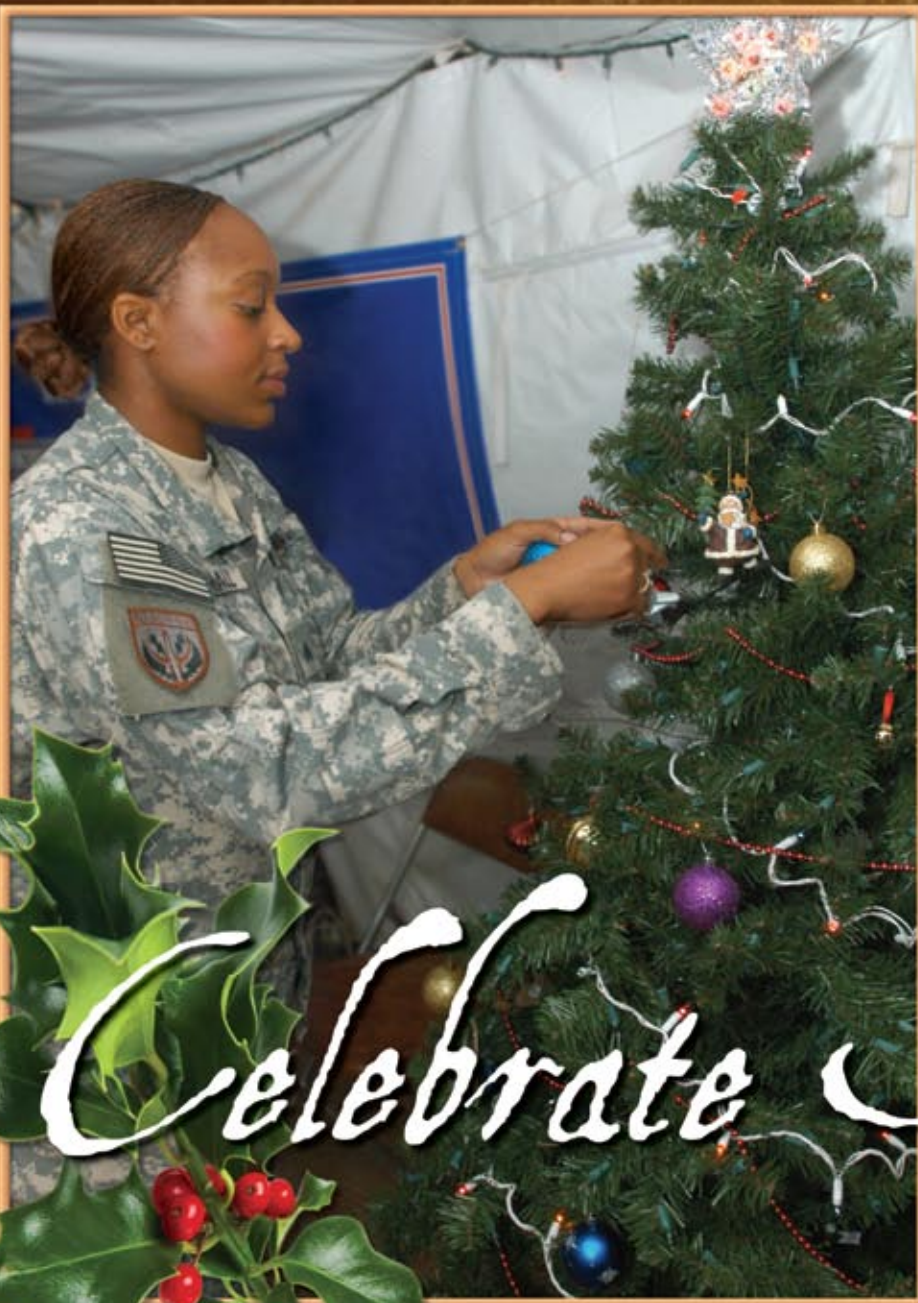
“One of the finest banners, for the looks and appearance and actually for the sentimentality of it, was given to an Army Reserve family. They had three daughters and one was killed in action, so that banner was topped with the gold star with two blue stars under it,” he recalled.

Raubeson was recently certified by the Army’s Institute of Heraldry, which now recognizes him as an official banner maker.

The rules governing who can display service-star banners are very strict. According to the institute’s Web site, only spouses, parents (including foster parents), children, stepchildren and siblings are authorized to display the banners.

Churches, schools, fraternities, sororities, societies and businesses that have members serving can also hang the banners.

Raubeson also recently registered as a nonprofit: Service Star Banners, Inc. He is working on a Web site, but in the meantime, anyone interested in requesting a banner can email him at grunt_lcp160@yahoo.com. **sm**



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